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# REFLECTIONS

ON THE VARIOUS

## ADVANTAGES

RESULTING FROM THE

DRAINING, INCLOSING,

AND

ALLOTING

OF

LARGE COMMONS

AND

COMMON FIELDS.

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Quare agite o proprios generatim discite cultus,  
Agricolæ.———

VIRGIL.

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By W. PENNINGTON. *K*

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REFLECTIONS, &c.

A fine air is so extremely agreeable, we always find it reckoned among the first recommendations of any country: and where the situation is such, that the air cannot be expected to be so pure as could be wished, it behoves the inhabitants to attempt every thing in their power, that will probably make it more wholesome; as it is the salubrity of the air which contributes, at least as much as any thing, to the longevity of mankind. And it is this longevity which makes some countries appear so populous, where the temperature of the climate is favorable, or where the manners and customs are such as compensate for any severity or defect one way or other. It is then in vain to project schemes of population, if we do not take such methods as are most likely to secure the preservation of the people. The plague is, without dispute, the most dreadful of all epidemical diseases; and the horror, with which most people even hear of it, A 2





## REFLECTIONS, &c.

**A** Fine air is so extremely agreeable, we always find it reckoned among the first encomiums of any country: and where the situation is such, that the air cannot be expected to be so pure as could be wished, it behoves the inhabitants to attempt every thing in their power, that will probably make it more wholesome; as it is the salubrity of the air which contributes, at least as much as any thing, to the longevity of mankind. And it is this longevity which makes some countries appear so populous, where the temperature of the climate is favorable, or where the manners and customs are such as compensate for any severity or defect one way or other. It is then in vain to project schemes of population, if we do not take such methods as are most likely to secure the preservation of the people.

The plague is, without dispute, the most dreadful of all epidemical diseases; and the horror, with which most people even hear of

it, adds greatly to its malignity where it unhappily prevails: but the plague, properly so called, is not the only disease that proceeds from a similar cause; [as there are diseases peculiarly endemic in fens and such like low marshy boggy places, which may be said with a good deal of probability to be occasioned in the same manner. It is indeed defined a most acute fever, arising from a poisonous *miasma* (or mixture of infectious matter) brought from oriental countries; which may be proper *here*: yet the plague at *Constantinople* is with great ingenuity conjectured to proceed from poisonous insects, brought by easterly winds from the swampy forests and immense morasses of *Tartary*, where they are first produced. And hence it is that the plague is more common in the towns along the coast of *Turky* in *Asia* than in any other part of that vast empire, *Egypt* alone excepted, where the poisonous insects are produced as well as in *Tartary*.—When it is said that certain diseases owe their origin to noxious exhalations and some filthiness in the air, which proceed from marshy stagnant waters, if we admit this *hypothesis*, and we may as well as any other, it must be meant that the air about  
such

such places abounds with insects, and particularly some imperceptibly small and of a pestiferous quality; as such waters are very justly said to be the fruitful seminary of verminous putrefaction: these, being taken into the mouth with the breath and swallowed, or imbibed with any liquid, first of all affect the stomach; whereas virulent exhalations of the mineral or nitro-sulphureous sort, and such as render the air too unctuous, clammy, and gross for respiration, immediately affect the lungs, as is evident from the damp in coal-mines, the vapor of lighted charcoal, and of the *Grotto del Cani* in Italy. And that there is a much greater affinity than is commonly imagined between the causes of pestilential fevers, and even those of an intermitting sort, called agues, is very evident from what is looked upon as the best method of cure; which is to expel the poisonous matter by vomit as soon as possible, and before the administration of any medicine whatever\*.—Fear is allowed to have

\* The *hypothesis*, just hinted at in this cursory way, is recommended to consideration in a philosophical and political light—and it is left to the learned among the faculty to examine with more judgment and accuracy how far it can be supported. It is however well attested that some medicines, which



have a very strange effect in the plague: it has sometimes the same in agues. And hence probably it is, that the nostrums and amulets, recommended by the experience of many people, have such influence, after the regular efforts of the faculty have proved unsuccessful: where it is manifest the operation must very much, if not altogether, depend on fancy.

But without farther argument about the similarity of causes in those diseases, it is incontestibly certain, that such as live in low,

which are presumed specifics in the cure of agues, have had the same singular effect in the cure of the plague: for in the year 1752,—“ the French ambassador’s servant was saved at “ *Buinkere* by means of some bark and ipecacouana;” and what makes the circumstance still more singularly striking, “ he was the only person that recovered of all the gang that “ were then taken ill in our village,”—as Dr. Mackenzie, the physician who prescribed for him, positively affirms. And in speaking of the general symptoms, the same ingenious gentleman observes, “ The pestilential fever shews it- “ self first by a chilliness and shiverings, even in the months “ of July and August, so very like the first approaches of an “ ague, that it is impossible to distinguish the one from the “ other at first sight. This cold fit is soon accompanied “ with a loathing nausea and desire of vomiting, which ob- “ liges the patient at last to discharge a vast quantity of bi- “ lious matter, with great uneasiness and oppression in the “ thorax and mouth of the stomach, attended sometimes “ with a dry cough, as in an intermitting fever, and even “ in this stage it is very difficult to distinguish the one from “ the other.” *Philosoph. Transact.* Vol. LIV.

wet,



wet, marshy places, are not only very subject to agues, but eruptive fevers also; and it is observed, that the measles and small-pox are generally of a more malignant sort in those places than in others where the air is comparatively dry and pure. From whence it is plain, that floods and inundations, where the waters are permitted to stagnate and corrupt, are the principal occasion of agues, pestilential and spotted fevers; and that the prevention of them can only be effected in such situations by draining, the salutary purposes of which may still be promoted by the introduction of running water, where it is practicable, into the principal drains, for the use of the inhabitants and their cattle: it being the misfortune of such places very often to have too little as well as too much water.

But if the *Auri sacra Fames* be a disease in this part of the world at the least equally epidemical with any other, it may very justly be observed—A country, that is flooded for half the year, or liable to frequent inundations, which convert it into a lake for a long time, must afford a very insufficient and precarious support, if compared with one on the same level, that is well drained and properly culti-

cultivated; it may indeed support a few, accustomed to get their living by the catching of fish or wild-fowl, or by cutting reed and the like, that grows in stagnated waters, at the proper seasons: it may indeed be approved of in its present state by the selfish and luxurious who live at some distance, and can be supplied at a cheap rate with such commodities: and it may at certain intervals abound with pasturage. But what are these advantages considered as equivalents in contradiction to what it might be, where the draining is very practicable, the soil capable of the best cultivation, and some of it of the richest sort?

And it is far from being an inconsiderable, though but an incidental advantage derived from draining in such a country, that an inland navigation may be effected at the same time. The utility, I was going to say the necessity, of which is so great, we find a noble personage has lately completed one in such a manner as would do honour to the magnificence of the powerfulest prince in *Europe*. His example too has had the desired effect. *Englishmen* are the same in peace as war; they want not ingenuity, yet not so whimsical in their inventions; daring to the

last degree, yet not so briskly enterprizing as some of their neighbours: do but once satisfy them it is their duty as brave men, or for their advantage as a trading people, the strongest fortresses serve but to inflame their ardor, rocky mountains and all the various impediments of nature yield at once to their art and indefatigable industry.

The draining of a country therefore contributes both to the health and wealth of it's inhabitants: and it is presumed their wealth in particular may be very much increased by the inclosure and allotment of large commons and common fields.—But this being a matter much controverted by some, whose patriotic intentions are unquestionable, the discussion of it may be expected to be more difficult: for it is said, that all inclosures are detrimental to the state, from their tendency to depopulation. And the amiable *Montesquieu* seems to be of this opinion; who even carries his objections against machines invented for the abridgment of art, or manual labour, so far as to dislike water-mills: “because,” he says, “they have deprived an infinite multitude of their employment, a vast number of persons of water and great part of the land of



"its fertility." This last circumstance must be peculiar to *France*, or other countries productive of rice; the other must be a local inconvenience; and the first will lose its force when a variety of manufactures is established. In the 14th chap. of the 23d book of the *Spirit of Laws* this sage author treats of the productions of the earth, which require a greater or less number of men: He observes, "Pasture lands are but little peopled, because they find employment only for a few. "Corn lands employ a great many men, and "vineyards infinitely more.

"It has been a frequent complaint in *England*, that the increase of pasture-land diminished the inhabitants: and it has been observed in *France*, that the prodigious number of vineyards is one of the great causes of the multitude of people."

He then remarks, that coal-pits supplying a proper substance for fuel, there is less occasion in those countries where they are found for forests, and therefore the lands may be cultivated. And concludes with a short panegyric on the cultivation of rice, as being equal to an immense manufacture.



The complaint in *England* he rests on the authority of Bishop *Burnet*, who says, "The  
 " greatest number of the proprietors of land,  
 " finding more profit in selling their wool  
 " than their corn, inclosed their estates: the  
 " commons, ready to perish with hunger,  
 " rose up in arms: they insisted on a division  
 " of the lands; the young king even wrote on  
 " this subject. And proclamations were made  
 " against those, who inclosed their lands."  
*Abridg. of the History of the Reformation.*

A writer must be destitute of all modesty, who does not dissent from such great authorities with the utmost diffidence and respect: and yet the liberty is allowable, and may sometimes be taken with decency.

The Baron's reasoning must hold good, where the lands are equally divided, as was the case in some republics, by an Agrarian law: for being dispersed all over the country, the same people both cultivate and consume; and 'tis certain that corn, rice, potatoes, or the like, will employ and support more people than possibly could be employed and supported by only grazing the same ground. But where arts and manufactures flourish, his reasoning can only have a relative goodness, as

it is more difficult to ascertain the numbers that may be maintained, and specify the produce that contributes most.

The [Bishop] taking up with the popular opinion, has given us rather a relation of facts, founded upon it, than any reasoning in its justification to convince us.—It being very insignificant what either the young or the old King wrote, tho' it might be condescension in such great personages to write at all, as the arguments of a King don't depend on the author's title for their goodness any more than those of other men; and yet they often do for their influence.

Other Writers also, who have propagated as much as possible the same opinion, don't seem to distinguish properly in their remarks (which ought to be founded on a very complicated calculation and fairly drawn) between a state where an Agrarian law might be established, and one supported both by the produce of its lands, its manufactures, and an extensive commerce. In the former, the inhabitants being confined within certain limits, and depending for subsistence solely on the produce of their own country, must undoubtedly prefer that method of culture, which

will

will at once employ and maintain the most people. And even then the produce, tho' as great as possible, will be insufficient; so that the emission of colonies must be resolved on, the too great multiplication of children prevented, or their men let out to war. The practice of some states in ancient Greece, and the conduct of the *Savifs* at present, may be appealed to in proof of this.—In the latter, an occasional failure of the productions of the earth, or a general deficiency in some particular, is easily supplied; and that very supply becomes advantageous as a means of employment: which is plainly the case in *England*, and much more remarkably so in *Holland*.

But to come more closely to the point——  
The Baron's argument, or rather position, is this: Pasture-lands employ but few, corn-lands a great many men: and it is confirmed by an instance produced from history, wherein it is alledged, that the proprietors of land, finding more profit in selling their wool than their corn, inclosed their estates; which occasioned an insurrection of the common people, ready to perish with hunger. This circumstance is to inform us that they did not rise in arms out of mere wantonness or resentment, but were  
com-



compelled to do so by famine, produced by a scarcity of corn, and want of employment in consequence of the inclosures.—There is no necessity to avert the force of the argument by observing with what reluctance ancient privileges are commonly given up, whether in exchange for a better or a worse condition; that a famine may happen in spite of cultivation; or that it is far oftener owing to artifice than to a want of the productions of the earth. For whatever was the real occasion of the famine referr'd to, the new practice would be sure to be blamed.

The great numbers dissatisfied with the dissolution of the monasteries and the alienation of the church-lands, by which not only the monks and swarms of supernumerary ecclesiastics were deprived of an easy maintenance, but multitudes of idle and reduced gentlemen, who went from convent to convent, and depended on the monkish hospitality; multitudes too of vagrant beggars, that strolled about the country in assurance of relief from an ostentatious display of charity very common then and very common still in popish countries, particularly in the *Pope's* territories; all these, the lazy, the useless, the profligate, would



would be sure to inveigh unanimously and with the bitterest execrations against all innovations whatsoever. — And can we wonder that the inclosure of some estates should occasion an insurrection, when the injudicious policy of the government itself seem'd to concur with the endeavours of several friends, and all the enemies of the reformation, to discourage the practice? No matter for their respective motives; the topic was still the same; the kingdom would be ruined by such innovations. But for all such outcries, made either then or now, a pure and unconstrained profession of the christian religion, (at least in comparison of *popery*) a manly sense of liberty and independence, a spirit of industry, and an emulation to excel in arts and sciences, were incontestibly occasioned by them. For it is certainly owing to them, that we enjoy all we peculiarly love and esteem as *Englishmen*, and that we are the wealthy, powerful, free people we think ourselves at present. Discontent, clamors, insurrections may therefore as well be brought to prove that the reformation itself was impolitic and irreligious, as that the inclosure of lands had it's natural effect immediately

mediately and occasioned a want of employment and a want of corn.

But surely cattle are necessary as well as corn both for food and cloathing and various conveniencies of life: and if, for the sake of population, we must endeavour to raise such necessaries as cost us most labour, cattle must yield to corn, and corn itself to potatoes, these in their turn to rice, in countries that will produce it. This is a wild extreme, and fit only for a *Platonic* republic. Let us consider then, by way of answer to the complaint frequent in *England*, That the increase of pasture land has diminished the inhabitants, whether the inclosure of commons has really such a *natural* tendency that way as is commonly represented.

It is allowed on all hands, \* that the produce of an inclosed estate is far superior to what it

was

When the author committed these reflections to paper, he had not seen a small pamphlet, whose promising title (being *An Enquiry into the Reasons for and against Inclosing the Open Fields*) induced him to buy it, with a design to suppress the publication of any thing on the subject, if he found the arguments impartially stated on both sides. But in truth the title is far too comprehensive for the performance, which might with more propriety have been, *An Enquiry into the Reasons against Inclosing*: for in the very first page, the anonymous author discovers his disposition, and would be witty

was when it lay open; but then 'tis observed, that fewer hands are required to manage it, and of consequence that the power of the state must be affected by a diminution of people. This may be the case, but is not the natural consequence of inclosures; for the natural consequence is certainly advantageous to the public as well as individuals. A greater abundance of corn or cattle can never be prejudicial of itself either to the maintenance or increase of mankind; much less can it be so in

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at the expence of "the big-bellied grazier on his gelding in the "inclosure." Among other inferences easily deducible from an impartial review of the subject, the enquirer presents you with this for one, "That *only* light, shallow, stony, or sandy "soil (which will do little more than bear fern, or support a "few rabbits) is to be improved by inclosing, and that rich "and deep soil, which is capable of bearing good crops, "both of grass and corn in its open-field state, ought never "to be inclosed at all." His opinion proves me mistaken therefore, when I say 'tis allowed on *all* hands; and yet I cannot think the singularity of his sentiments so well supported as to make me alter the assertion. Let me however assure this gentleman, that I am as far as he can be from desiring or designing anything incompatible with the true and permanent interest of the poor or the public; and that I would as soon ——"forge lies or histories for *Hume*;" nay even attempt, what every honest *Englishman* must have the most exquisite aversion to, a panegyric on the Earl of *Bute*; and, with all the meanness and self-denial of a slave, "Praise that proud Scot, whom all good men disdain."



a country, where arts, manufactures, and commerce have the highest encouragement; And while corn and cattle bear a proportionate price, as they certainly do at present, it can by no means follow that too much is taken from tillage by the grazier. Besides, the present method of agriculture has great advantages over the old: for it is now found that the alternate tillage and grazing of the same land, at proper intervals, except the generality of marsh land and other rich pasture, is extremely beneficial, and gradually improves it for both purposes. If the general produce be then increased, the greater number of people will be required for a general consumption, and therefore the inclosing of commons or common fields can have no tendency this way to depopulate.

Much stress, however, seems to be laid on the superior number of hands necessary to be employ'd in the production of corn. One would wonder how this opinion should still maintain its ground, especially in a country like *England*; for tillage (except in some few articles) is far from being so preferable to grazing, as is commonly pretended, on account of employing a superior number of hands.

An



An exact enquiry into circumstances, at least in a nation risen to grandeur, opulent and luxurious, will perhaps prove the contrary. Let it be supposed, then, without aiming at precision, that the proportion of hands in the different occupations of tillage and grazing, is as ten to one. This superiority must be presumed necessary for plowing, sowing, reaping, threshing, in short for the whole country business requisite to prepare the grain for the miller or maltster : the baker, brewer, or distiller, are all that follow, as persons employed in a further preparation of it for the consumer. And here ends the benefit of corn to society in the way of employing its members. But in grazing, the single article of wool alone, the produce of as many sheep as may be look'd after by one person, finds employment for at least five times as many people, including all the various branches of the woollen manufacture : not to mention the beasts that may be look'd after at the same time, and the materials they furnish for different trades, in common with sheep or distinct from them, as well as afford their carcases for provision. In this light then the number of hands employed in the preparation of what is produced by grazing for the consumer,

summer, is evidently far superior to those employed in the like preparation of corn. And of consequence, the grazing of land is so far from diminishing, that it finds employment for a greater number of men. And they who presume the contrary don't distinguish rightly between a general and a local populosity in the kingdom.

Now it is not very material whether the people live by thousands together, as in towns; or are dispersed over the face of the country, so long as they are constantly and usefully employ'd; unless we should suppose that the latter are more robust and hardy, generally more virtuous in their conduct, and live to a greater age. For there is no doubt that the intemperance and debauchery which prevail most in populous places, must inevitably debilitate the constitution as well as corrupt the morals, rendering those devotees to prodigality and dissipation at once the most worthless and most wicked of mankind. And let it not be thought that this concession is virtually giving up the main point in question, consider'd in a political light, which is the power of the state; as this power depends on the number and capacity of the people: for numerous

merous armies, composed of men accustomed to live in idleness and luxury half their time, do commonly make the victory more easy as well as glorious to the gallant few that attack them.—This may be the case, where the effeminacy is effected by a thorough corruption of principles and manners; as it certainly is where the natural faculties are enervated by despotism or the climate, because an habitual fear and indolence make them prefer slavery itself to fatigue, and almost every thing to death. But this will never be the case in *England* so long as the love of liberty is the ruling passion, tho' the manners of many be profligate and their principles corrupt and selfish; for tho' the passion itself may sometimes seem absorb'd by others a thousand ways diversified, let but a foreign enemy discover his disposition by open hostilities, or a wicked ministry at home attempt by some arbitrary stretch of power to oppress any part of the people, the smother'd spirit soon takes fire and kindles into a blaze, and not only the steady virtuous patriot, the intrepid hero, the friend of the best, the *British* constitution, but the meanest among the people, the voluptuary, the very valetudinarian,



and even avarice itself catches the flame, and will act for the public good. Such is the power of this noble principle, the boast of *Englishmen* and the glory of mankind! And so just is the observation, let manners and customs be what they will, the force of this principle will draw every thing to it!

But very far from wishing my brave countrymen should try it's strength by wantonly defying danger, and approaching so near abandoned profligacy as to depend on a proper exertion of it's influence only in the last extremity, let this warm account of it's efficacy be consider'd as a good argument to prove that the inhabitants of this nation may be of the same service to one another and to the state, wherever and in whatever way they can find proper employment, and procure the necessities of life; as there is no danger in this of any other civilized country of the North, that the people will ever submit to be slaves, however variously modified the form of government may be they happen to live under. This is manifest from that remarkable revolution in *Denmark*, and the present state of *Sweden*. It is said even the common people of *Poland* think themselves not slaves, tho' in

vassalage to their grandees; whom they look upon as persons of superior capacity and their natural protectors, and are therefore attached to them by every tie of principle, affection, and interest. And the *Highland Clans* were in much the same situation formerly. The very *Russians*, as they refine from barbarism, may be observed to gain more privileges, and 'tis very likely that instead of being the most submissive, despicable slaves ever known in such a region, they will become (and perhaps at no very distant period) both as free and powerful as any people in the world. *England* itself has been advancing in liberty ever since the reformation; which it got more amply confirmed and established at the revolution; and an occasional deviation from those principles that first of all obtained and secured such an important blessing, it is hoped, will only alarm the people, and animate their endeavours to preserve it; as it is not at all probable they will ever again be so passively obedient as to suffer such another abominable brutish tyrant as *Henry the Eighth* to govern them. For as that monster released them from the political power of *Popery* rather out of resentment than from a principle of conviction, it must be only such another that will

will attempt the re-establishment of a religion only fit for slaves. Had Henry been informed that *Popery* would be more serviceable to a monarch than *Protestantism*, that the former would flourish most under an absolute government, and that the latter was equally favourable to civil and religious liberty, and would therefore best suit with a republican form of government or a *limited* monarchy, he would never have gratify'd his sensual appetite at the expence of his ambition, which upon the whole was certainly his predominant passion. — Let but the people of *England* seriously consider this, and they will suffer *Popery* as they would a cancer. An implicit submission of any sort being the very characteristic of slavery, and what will produce a greater debility in the state than the effeminate or profligate disposition of half their fellow subjects. And if ever they are oppressed by ecclesiastical or civil government, let them accuse their own corruption, let them lay the blame on a want of virtue, a want of sense, a want of honesty; for where all these are wanting, it would be a miracle indeed, and allowed by *Hume* himself, if there was not also a want of public spirit.

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The objections brought against the practice of inclosing estates, from a diminution of labour, a scarcity of corn, a national detriment by depopulation, are therefore so far from being well founded, that the natural consequence is the very reverse in every instance. And as the power and wealth of the *British* empire depend on their encouragement of manufactures and commerce, as well as the simple produce of the earth, it would be absurd to suppose the people useless, either in peace or war, that do not till the ground; or that the meanest mechanic is not of as much importance as the common labourer in the field. Ancient \* customs are however in some respects

\* Customs and projects have their characters, like men, not a little affected by unessential circumstances; so that we may say with the judicious *Quintilian*, *In quibusdam virtutes non habent gratiam, in quibusdam vitia ipsa delectant.*

spects like systems; every thing must be tortured, though the most unnaturally, into compliance; whereas, on their part, they will yield to nothing, or yield with the most perverse reluctance: for reason and superior utility, though proved against them in the most demonstrative manner, are generally admitted with difficulty, if at all. The interested and the injudicious are always sure to take advantage of this obstinacy, and the inattentive are very well satisfied with any opinion. No wonder then that inclosures, as an innovation, should come in for their share of obloquy; that politicians, patriots, lords and commons, should talk against them; or that they should be so often opposed with the utmost prejudice and malignity.

“ stock, mow, or plow upon their neighbours, they would  
 “ soon make them weary or ashamed of such dirty tricks,  
 “ and every one might enjoy his property with as little  
 “ injury or interruption from dishonest neighbours in the  
 “ open fields as in the inclosures. And if they *could* like-  
 “ wise agree on a mutual exchange of lands or little parcels  
 “ that lie dispersed in many different parts of the field, so  
 “ that each may have all his own laid together in one allot-  
 “ ment or two in a field, making proper allowances for the  
 “ difference of land, &c. they would secure the *principal*  
 “ convenience of inclosing, without subjecting themselves  
 “ and others to its many disadvantages.”

But

But of all objections it is frivolous, indeed it is silly, to blame the occupiers of land lately inclosed for making the most they can of it; as every individual always did and always will in such cases aim at his own advantage; and, if you except some temporary chances, it will be most certain and most durable when compatible with that of the public: for the produce, of whatever sort, being intended for public use, they may as well be directed what kind of corn to sow, whether it suits the soil or not, as that they must keep all in tillage that used to be so. And whatever may be pretended by some people, who are apt to talk positively of things they have never duly examined, there is no reason to apprehend that the occupier, if left to his choice, will be such an enemy to his own interest as to neglect the growth of corn, where the land is suitable for it.—Nor is the present dearness of corn occasioned by the conversion of too much land to pasture: for, was that the case, butchers-meat ought to be more plentiful and cheap; whereas it is found to be full as dear as corn. But the excessive dearness of provision and of all necessaries, so justly complained of and



so severely felt by the \* *half-starved* poor, is presumed to be neither owing to inclosures or a defective produce. For some pretend the free importation of corn and live-cattle — they might as well speak out, and say that plenty itself will not prevent it. There are people that can feel for their fellow-creatures no more than for their beasts of burthen, and will aim at their own emolument with the most composed indifference to the miseries of either: these are cursed from the heart by thousands, are declared accursed in *Scripture*, and are the farmer, that hoards his corn in hopes that his country will be still more distressed; and the engrosser, whether cornfactor, miller, or mealman; monopoly being the same voracious monster, that preys upon the public, whether maintained by a director or jobber, a plunderer of cowards in the *East*, or a plunderer of the poor in *England*.

But to evince the necessity, as well as public benefit, of draining and inclosing, in a more particular and circumstantial manner, we must specify the places supposed to be improveable by one or both. And here such

a variety offers, it is more difficult to select judiciously than it is to demonstrate clearly in favor of them. The common fields, fens, large plains, forests, moors, extensive mountainous tracts, which the north and east and west of *England*, as well as many parts of the midland country, so amply afford, would require so many distinct treatises to exhibit in a fair view the peculiar and general advantages deducible from the draining and inclosing of each, as their respective circumstances require: it seems, however, most proper to fix on a place capable of improvement in both respects; and perhaps the fens in *Lincolnshire* will be most suitable for the purpose, and none more so than the east and west fens in the neighbourhood of *Boston*.

I must beg leave therefore to recapitulate a summary of the advantages naturally resulting from draining and inclosing, especially those which seem in a peculiar manner applicable to the circumstances of these fens; after which it will be proper to state the objections, brought by some people against the draining and inclosing of them in particular, in an explicit candid manner, with such answers as are presumed

sumed sufficient for their refutation; and at the same time take occasion to consider the arguments *pro* and *con* about the inclosing of open fields in parishes, with some remarks on the practicability of improving certain places, that produce nothing worth regarding at present, by the plantation of such forest-trees as suit the soil and situation.

As to the draining and inclosing of the *east* and *west* fens then, it may be asserted as an incontestible truth, that the increase, both in corn and cattle, would be immensely greater than at present, the value whereof would be very much enhanced by its general safety from rots and floods; the air must be rendered much more salubrious, and of consequence the endemic disorders, peculiar to such-like places, far less prevalent; there would be employment and support for above twenty times as many people; and the incidental advantages to the proprietors of low grounds already inclosed and contiguous to the fens, or situated in such manner as to be benefited by the draining of them, would be very considerable; besides, the benefit of an enlarged commerce would be prodigiously great to the adjacent country by



an inland navigation, which might be easily effected at the same time\*.

After enumerating so many advantages, and of such vast importance to the public as well as individuals, one would think that nothing but absolute inability on the part of the proprietors should prevent so beneficial an undertaking——But the principal proprietors are very able, only inattentive, indolent, perhaps too rich already, and it is so much every one's

\* It is allowed by all, who have no lucrative views to promote by continuing things in their present state, that the best and most effectual draining of these fens is into *Wainfleet* haven; from whence it is extremely easy to make the rivulet navigable even up to *Partney-Mill*. And it seems very odd that such an undertaking is not attempted, since the commissioners of sewers have of late been *buffed* into negligence, and a personage of such power and distinction as his grace the duke of *Ancafter*, with many others that might be named, must so greatly increase the value of their estates in the neighbourhood: and the more so, as we find the improvements and securities arising from draining and an inland navigation have engrossed the attention and regard of several nations, and set the inhabitants to work with all the mercantile spirit and resolution of *Dutchmen*. I will only just mention the navigable communication effected through land between the gulph of *Lyons* and the bay of *Biscay* by the *Canal-Royal* of *Languedoc*, though the point of partition is 213 yards in perpendicular height above the level of the two seas; with the present attempt to establish a similar communication between the *Trent* and *Severn* in *England*, and the *Forth* and *Clyde* in *Scotland*.

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concern that no one will look after it. However, there are objections; and no wonder, as there are objections, made one would imagine by way of private prayer to the devil, even against plenty, health, and happiness: for it is certain that

*By devastation the rough warrior gains,  
And farmers fatten most when famine reigns;  
For sickly seasons the physicians wait,  
And politicians thrive in broils of state.*

The occupiers and proprietors of *toftsteads* are first alarmed, and object to the inclosing and allotting of the fens. But why? Because their share would be very inadequate to the privileges they now enjoy on a free common.

Very likely — And yet, if this objection has weight, it must be in the opinion of very weak or very wicked people; such as have no notion of improvements in agriculture, or such as would live at large, and prey, like pikes, upon one another. For one need not beg the question to suppose a fair division among the proprietors; in which case they would certainly have all that belongs to them.

Another objection ariseth from the peculiar condition of the poor in those parts, who get  
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their livelihood a variety of ways out of the fens; which, it is said, they would be deprived of, were the fens to be inclosed and become private property.

But why so? We may suppose they are people accustomed to labour, and if the fens were drained and inclosed, there would be work for at least twenty times as many as can find employment therein at present; and such work too as would be vastly more advantageous to individuals, as well as the public. And the extraordinary profits, which they sometimes make by their present method of employing themselves, (for we may imagine they will now be extolled to the highest) seem to have been but of little service to most of them; as we don't find them in any better condition than the poor in other places, but, if we may judge from appearances, in a great deal worse.

Let not the censorious misapprehend me: by no means let the poor themselves be persuaded that this is all a scheme to serve the rich, and at their expence. As an advocate for improvements of public advantage, I must expose the insignificance and futility of self-interest, that secret enemy to all that is generous, good and useful: and it is all the same



to me whether it is dignify'd with the glitter of a star, wears a cockade, a coronet or mitre, struts with the consequence of a 'squire, or delves with a spade for bread. Impartiality, therefore, makes me speak with freedom, with contempt or ridicule, just as the object seems to deserve.

I cannot help thinking then that good-nature turns silly, when it commiserates the poor in such situations, and says, 'Tis a pity to rob them of bread, by depriving them of those means to get it they have been long accustomed to; as many of them, perhaps, will not be able to support themselves any other way. Perhaps, indeed, they may not be willing, whether able or not. But nothing of this kind is intended, or ought to be so conducted, as to distress the poor, by laying them under greater difficulties; which would be horridly wicked undoubtedly: on the contrary, was the scheme proposed but properly executed, it must afford them many more opportunities of procuring the necessaries and enjoying the common comforts of life. Cannot, therefore, these humane and well-disposed people extend their charitable regards a little, and petition the government, while they are in the humour of repealing laws, to check the  
planters

planters in *North America*? Let the poor native *Indians* (tho' something more savage than many in the fens) enjoy all their ancient privileges, and cultivate their own country their own way. For 'tis equal pity, notwithstanding some trifling dissimilarity of circumstances, that they should be disturbed.

The mention of *North America* strikes me with a reflection.—It seems very strange to encourage the peopling and cultivation of that extensive region as a national concern, and at the same time permit large forests, commons and open fields in the mother country to remain in pretty much the same condition as when agriculture and commerce were not half so well understood, or of half the consequence they are at present: for it is indisputable that every argument, which convinces in the former case, must certainly convince one, every one indeed except the meanly selfish and the interested in that part peculiarly, and much more forcibly in the latter.—This should not be understood as an insinuation in the least invidious. The flourishing state of our colonies is without doubt of the most important consequence: our general commerce, the principal consumption of our manufactures, the support and maintenance of a naval force superior

to that of any other nation, are all acknowledged to depend very much upon it. And yet 'tis possible, the parent may so fondly attend to the welfare of her offspring as to forget her own; may glory in promoting their rising greatness till they unnaturally rise against her: nor is this the dictate of a jealous spirit, or the surmise of an ill-informed fancy. The conduct of some colonies may be appealed to as a proof of their disposition: for, having received their portion, and become fixed in the world, they already begin to behave like independent undutiful children.

There is another objection, which comprehends the interest of the state as well as individuals, and is not peculiar to the inclosure of large commons; for which reason its force will be consider'd hereafter, but in the present paragraph only as affecting the fens.—Now it is imagined that the fens would be engrossed by wealthy farmers and graziers, as soon as inclosed, and a very insufficient share, if any at all, fall to the middling sort, even in the neighbourhood. As this is only supposition, it can deserve no better answer than a contrary supposition: but allowing it all the force of probability, one may venture to say the fens could hardly be more engrossed than they



they are at present, and it is immaterial to people having right of common whether by the proprietors of horses, beasts, sheep, or geese, so long as these proprietors consume the produce by something or other. It is reported that some of them secure spots of considerable extent to themselves, and if any person presumes to interfere, by sending any stock to the same place, they act as arbitrarily, and with as uncontrollable authority in defiance of the laws, that either are or should be in force, as if their private property was invaded.—Such as these therefore may be justly called the *Great profanum vulgus* of the fens.—But there are others of the same licentious conduct, and still worse principles: these lurk like spiders, and, when they see a chance, fall out, and drive, or drown or steal, just as suits them, and are the *Buccaneers* of the country.—The fens, however, are not only eat up in an unfair manner by the stock of persons having right of common, but also of many persons that pretend to none: so that the proprietors or their tenants not only injure one another by stocking in an indistinct confused manner, by a general neglect of proper draining, by public oppression or private  
villainy,

villainy, but expose their common interest to be taken advantage of for a trifle by the covetous. Nor are the fines, that may be levied, sufficient to prevent the grievance; as the very persons employ'd for that purpose are generally the persons guilty.—And were the fens of such advantage, as some represent them, in their present open state, one would think that considerable estates might be appealed to as incontestible evidence; and yet nothing of this sort can be done in any proportion equal to what might be expected from the occupation of so much ground by many people of great care and abilities. Here and there, indeed, an instance of a deal of money being scraped together by some half-starved save-all, means nothing by way of argument wherever it happens. One would think too, if the present advantages were really so important as some pretend, the inhabitants in particular of the parishes on the confines of the fens, or surrounded by them, would most of them be in tolerably good circumstances on account of their situation, and as a consequence, the necessitous poor would be few, and their parish rates very low. But I am informed the case is quite the reverse: nor do I wonder at it; as it is a case likely to grow worse, not only  
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in those parishes, but in all others, where the fields continue open. And the reason is obvious. Such as these then must change to bad indeed, must have every thing taken from them by engrossers, if they alter for the worse.

But of all the objections, the most extraordinary is that made against the draining of the fen ; and yet it is said to be the most just, because it answers the purpose of the original grant, and confines the benefit almost intirely to the poor ; for they pretend that it is better for them when it is most of it under water, as the fodder, thatch, and the like, cannot be destroyed by cattle, and there is greater plenty of fish. A plain proof surely, if any thing may be allowed to be so, that the present temporary, limited and precarious advantages are very insufficient to countervail the prodigious profits that must accrue to the proprietors and the public too, by the proper cultivation of it when drained and inclosed. Tell me then, ye sanguine sticklers for old customs, that dream sometimes of national detriment and depopulation, how much the fen contributes to prevent those evils, now it is in it's best, it's drowned state : tell me, I say, whether all the rushes, mats, and reeds, all the fodder, fuel,



fuel, fowl and fish, the produce of any one year, are equivalent only to a thousand lasts of oats: and yet what are a thousand lasts to the quantity that might be expected from the ground that would be plow'd for corn every year?—But it may be thought I have said more than enough about the fens in particular.

Let us consider then the force and propriety of the objections usually made against inclosures in general, with a view to elucidate the universal utility of the practice; whereby it will appear, that the odium commonly thrown upon it by interested or impolitic people is very undeserved: and that this may be done in the most impartial manner; let the arguments, which are deem'd unanswerable, be fairly represented, and, with something of that satirical cast an adversary himself would give them.

Now it is objected——When lordships or commons are inclosed, they are generally engrossed by a few farmers or graziers; lordships in particular are often occupy'd by one, or two at the most; not only cottages but large farm houses fall to ruin; and there is no encouragement for servants to marry, as they cannot fix with any prospect of bringing up

up a family. Therefore inclosures must be supposed detrimental to the public, as they have a tendency to depopulate, and introduce once again a sort of rustic vassalage: for the engrossing grazier is soon enabled by his enormous profits to occupy enough for at least ten families; and if he proves of the *mundungus* grasping kind, he will not be easy till he does so. If he be of a genteel turn, why then he treats handsomely, knows the pedigree of horses, like a Newmarket jockey, and has judgment at a bett; perhaps keeps his hounds, wears his *queu*, runs his post-chariot, and so swells into a petty 'squire; a very contemptible creature! In this case he may let off a little: but the under-tenant seldom has enough, or what is cheap enough, to support a family. So that it is plain the usual consequence of inclosing commons and common fields, is the encouragement of one or two at the expence of many. The retailing shopkeeper complains he has but one customer from a place, where there used to be five or six at the least—The collector of tolls, that but little corn is offer'd to sale by parcel, samples being more convenient for great farmers.—The consumer blames monopolies of every species, for the dearness and scarcity of what he wants.—The housekeeper in towns ob-

serves, that the small farmers were the people that supply'd the markets with butter, eggs, cheese, chickens, and the like. — But I won't draw the argument farther in detail. It's principal force very evidently depends on the practice of laying farm to farm in the occupation of one tenant, as being obstructive to population by preventing matrimony, and exchanging the frugal customs of five or six industrious families, for the fashionable mimicry of luxury in one man ; or for the oppressive unrestrained rapacity of an avaricious churl, who will hardly allow necessaries to the poor in his parish, perhaps to the reduced farmer, reduced too by his means from competency to want, while the hard-hearted wretch, in contempt of justice and the sleeping laws, domineers with a despotism that a *Russian* would not submit to.

But let me not say too much. — Instead of representing the argument as weak, superficial, inconclusive, with the calmness and disrespect of a master in controversy, I seem on the contrary to allow it all the mighty consequence of my own sanction. After all this approbation, what can be said against it? It depends on facts, is supported by evidence, recommended by the greatest popularity, how



is it possible then to invalidate a single circumstance? and if that can't be done, 'tis plain that inclosures do more harm than good. — Well, and if it should be so, I can only be in the same evil case with many of my superiors. Does not the great *Dryden* mention a noted advocate even for Christianity, who brought more objections against it than he himself gave good answers to? But if the example of my betters dead and gone be no excuse for me, as I am but a little one, I may sure be suffer'd to conceal myself in some hollow limb of a certain *Colossus* in literature now alive. And yet this is not meant to apologize: for I shall never pay my respects to fame with servility, while I have the sense to esteem virtue and the spirit of an *Englishman* to regard truth and love my country. These are the objects of my attention, and I would not support an hypothesis against their interest.

After this short excursion, made like many more without much design or use, let me return in earnest to the argument, which I own has great force, if consider'd only in a single light; but, then, like most others, it will bear a variety, and conviction with some people is the consequence of every exposure. Its popularity in particular is no proof of its propriety.

or goodness, only of its chance: For, as the poet saith, in imitation of *Horace*,

*It may be so: the people's voice is odd;*

*It is, and it is not, the voice of God.*

And that I may develop it a little, and come at its principles, let me introduce an uncontested maxim—*Ab abusu ad usum, non valet consequentia.*

Lands are better managed in allotments, and inclosed, than when they lie open: for ten people will make more of five and twenty acres each than they would of five hundred which they stocked in common; and the greater the quantity the greater the disproportion of profit. Inability, ignorance, envious perverseness, personal antipathy, and a hundred things, prevent the proper management of commons, and stock on commons. And all the laws, formerly made to enforce the necessary regulations in such circumstances, are so obsolete and uncoercive, the execution of them so expensive, and the evasion of them for the most part so easy, that the most spirited and resolute of the advocates for open fields and unfenced commons are often heard to complain themselves. The insufficiency of the old laws is certainly owing to their partial abrogation: had they

they been totally repealed, no dependence would be laid on them, and other securities would be regarded. As it is, like the laws of sewers, they are and they are not in force. Many customs depending on the common, many on the ancient statute laws, make the privileges of open parishes and commons much less considerable than formerly; and those very parishes and commons of inferior value, as being not in a state capable of equal improvement with the generality of other places.

I may assert then that 'tis allowed, the produce of an inclosed common or field, in cattle or corn, or both, is vastly superior to what it ever was when open, and the property in some measure indeterminate. If so, pray whence arises the grievance, or what occasions the public detriment? It cannot possibly proceed from plenty. More numerous flocks of sheep, sheep too of more than double value, a better breed of horses and beasts, a much greater quantity of corn, must be strange causes of famine, misfortunes and depopulation. Impossible! One would think it absurd even to suppose it.— Well, it may be so! but let the absurdity be ever so great, what else can we blame with so much justice for the present high price of provisions, which has continued for some time, and is still likely to continue, to the prejudice  
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of the public, by greatly distressing the mechanic and labourer, if we don't impute it to the modern practice of inclosing estates, which soon get into few hands, and then the whole produce is commonly managed like that of the *East Indies*, which is brought to *England*? — People, who argue at this rate, surely never heard of there being any famine or scarcity in the world till just of late: and as to the artificial combinations among the farmers and corn-factors, or any others concerned, we need not fear that the ill effects of them will last long, or that all the dexterity and villainous devices of any in trade will be able to counterwork and frustrate the endeavours of an amiable prince and his parliament to reform such horrid abuses and provide for the common welfare.

It has been observed, that if too much land had been taken from tillage, one might expect that cattle of all kinds would be very plentiful, and butchers meat very cheap: but it is not so? And yet this is the only way that inclosures can affect the community, by diminishing the produce of corn: for there is no doubt but the occupier, if he may do as he pleases, will always cultivate the ground with a view to the most advantage; and the na-

tional demand will soon show what is most wanted, and consequently what is most profitable. And it ought to be so: 'tis the business of individuals to manage their concerns in a manner the most conducive to their private interest; and it is the duty of government to observe that such management shall coincide with that of the public. Would not the application of a few pensions, allowed at present to such as don't want or don't deserve any, be better directed to maintain a proper number of inspectors in every county, men of reputed judgment and integrity, who might every Midsummer receive an account from the constables, delivered upon oath and attested, what number of acres is sown, and with what kind of corn, in their respective parishes? A few experiments would enable them to judge how it yielded in general, and by comparing the produce of different years, it would be easy to discover whether there was sufficient for home consumption: and if there was any reason to apprehend there was not, the exportation (whatever the price might then be) should be stop'd till the meeting of parliament. A regulation, something similar to this, has been often established and adapted to the circumstances of several states.

And these inspectors might be impower'd, when corn was dear, to report what quantities there seem'd to be unthresh'd, or board-ed up in granaries, belonging to wealthy avaricious farmers: for it is often owing to the conduct of these, and the dealers in corn and meal, that the poor suffer extremely when there is little or no necessity. The trade of this kingdom is so extensive, the rich may find employment for their money in various branches of it: it can be no hardship, therefore, to correct the enormity of one. And if it was, shall an article so important as that of corn, a necessary of life, be preserved in ricks very often for vermin, hoarded in granaries till it is fusty; exported, reimported, and sometimes tossed into the rivers or sea, when it has been spoiled for the sake of a few, while multitudes are distressed for want of it, and the most profitable manufactures of the country are affected by it's dearness? Much parade in calculation may be often made about a balance of trade with foreign states, and all this for the sake of silver and gold: but without affronting common sense, by endeavouring to depreciate these articles (for they are no other in trade, whatever the miser or the fool may make of them) one may venture to say that the



the public never suffered so much even by the trade to *France* as by the with-holding, engrossing, or monopoly of corn. For the hundred thousands, which we lose by that, are far from equivalent, considered only as a national loss, to the hundred thousands of people that starve, or become a burthen to society instead of supporting it by their art or labour; and this sometimes when there is corn enough in the country to support them.

It can be only in this way that inclosures are injurious; and that the injury may be occasioned with more facility, though the produce be ten times as great as before: as they afford an opportunity, especially where the proprietors are few, and more so where but one, to let a single person rent much more than ought to be occupied by any one\*. For in this case the farmer himself becomes a kind of merchant, and regulates every thing as much as possible in the same manner: having but

\* It has been said, That a noble duke, sensible of the injury hereby done to the community, has divided some of his large grazing-farms into smaller allotments, to be lett to a greater number of tenants, with a liberty of plowing certain proportions yearly of each, to render them of more extensive advantage. And let me add that such public virtue deserves the most public honor.

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make of them) one may venture to say that

one family to maintain and provide for by the profits of as much land as used formerly to support half a score, he carries on business in the wholesale way, and generally disposes of his commodity to the monopolizing factor. This, it is owned, may become an evil; and whatever occasions it, ought to be detested and discouraged: but there are times when the demand of the merchant is extremely beneficial; there are places where a person of capacity and fortune is required to make the necessary improvements: let the grievance be redressed then without affecting the advantages of such a conduct; as it is unreasonable that we should go without a blessing, because it may be abused to our prejudice.

The argument, indeed, would have a peculiar force against inclosures in general, could it be proved that farmers and graziers occupied more than was consistent with the public good *only* in such parishes as were lately inclosed: but this is far from being the case, as might be fully evinced by ten thousand instances. The inclosing of commons, therefore, cannot be said to occasion this bad custom, and can only be opposed with any propriety as something favorable to it. And if the custom it-

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self does not derive its origin from inclosing, as it certainly does not, we shall see it still prevail, whether inclosing be stopt or not. I need not however say we shall, for we may at present in many open parishes, where poverty seems to have fixed her residence as on a favourite spot. It would look systematic in me to give the reasons which, I think, occasion the alterations in such places, where farm falls to farm, and seldom gets divided again; where the poor are most of them without employment in their own parish for above half the year; where the rates, rents, repairs, are so considerable in the present condition, that all the frugality sufficient for the last century will hardly enable a farmer to thrive in this; and therefore let an advocate for the continuance of these parishes in their open state tell us why the inhabitants in general do not do so well as formerly, and why some of the evils, supposed inseparable from inclosures, grow upon them without any prospect of the benefits.

The occupation of too much ground by a single person cannot of consequence be sufficiently restrained by the prevention of any more inclosures: the redress of this grievance must depend on something more generally



efficacious; and it would be very ridiculous to decline an advantage for fear of a misfortune, that may happen whether we accept it or not. The example of the principal nobility and gentlemen of great estates might indeed in a great measure controul it, could they be prevailed on to think it their own and the nation's interest to set about it in earnest: but they may as easily be prevailed on quite to abolish it; as nothing less than a proper interposition of the legislature can effectually do it. It seems, however, very much disregarded, tho' it is said to be a growing evil, and the permission of it very portentous. For whole parishes are insufficient for a modern farmer, who must be mounted well enough for the severest fox-chace, if he means to come in sight of what he occupies in one day. No wonder then that farm-houses are converted into cottages, and sometimes not supported even for that purpose; all being swallowed up in the lonely villa and its conveniencies. And not much wonder in such cases that the ruin of the church should soon follow that of the houses through absolute neglect, equal therefore to an arbitrary demolition. But do not suppose the

the clergy suffer by this, or that you can from hence

*In reverend bishops note some small neglects.*

There is really no pretence for it, as all the ecclesiastical demands are very regularly and very gratuitously paid. In compliment for such punctuality, the rector gives the farmer no trouble about religion; but if he should have scruples, he may chuse his own spiritual guide, may keep a domestic chaplain if he pleases, be a *Methodist* or a *Mussulman*, and so go to heaven his own way.

But what shall we say of the country'squires, who take farm after farm into their own hands, and even whole lordships together: as if they had a mind to degrade themselves to rustics by the very means that others aspire to be gentlemen? For they do not undertake all this, like a *Tull*, a *Turbilly*, or a *Caldwell*, with a view to improve and bring agriculture to perfection; because for this purpose they might have variety enough, and not occupy a tenth part of what they do; but what they seem to want is more money than the common rent of the ground will amount to. This is plainly their motive, as they do little  
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or nothing more than an ingenious farmer would, who had a family to maintain and provide for out of his profits. Where people of fortune apply themselves to agriculture, with a public-spirited regard, as they can hazard experiments without hurting themselves, which tenants in general cannot do, they certainly deserve the highest commendation, and ought to be distinguished as friends to their country and benefactors to mankind: but where avarice alone is the cause of their application, they are certainly creatures just considerable enough for satirical remarks, but too contemptible for the serious animadversion of government, as it cannot be imagined that many will demean themselves in such a low ignominious manner. And it would give one pleasure to see their pride a little mortified with some device like this: A. B, of C. Esq; *Common Farmer*, (or *No Gentleman*, as one of them called out in open court, being of the grand jury and not entitled 'Squire) which they should fix on their waggons and carts, or pay 5l. per ann. for their exemption.

Now had tenants only occupied too much, a tax of 2s. in the pound might have been laid on all they rented above 200l. and of 5s. on



on all above 300l. a year: it being the best way of altering customs to make them disagreeable. But what is to be done with proprietors themselves? they will consider a scheme of this sort as an extension of the land-tax, and an indirect prohibition of doing what they please with their own. The *Farmer-Squire*, who, while he smacked a glass or two after dinner, used to forget his meanness and take a trip to *Utopia*, or of late to the *Isle of Bute*, in pursuit of patriotism, before he returned to the profitable toils of husbandry, will be sure to see the liberty of the subject affected, the prosperity of his country endangered, and be almost ready in good earnest to prefer *East Florida* to *Old England*. But make haste—pull him by the sleeve—stop his embarkation:—and let him know a sagacious friend of his has found out a safe way to evade the new law. Ay!—*Why* it must be so. Do but behold *Avaro*! He was before only a *Transport* in idea, now he seems one in reality.

Let not inclosures then, ye execrable enemies of the nation, ye engrossers of every rank and name, be scandalized for your enormities; let not their general utility be confronted by a few inconveniencies, which arise solely from  
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your own selfishness; let not a means of plenty, of employment, of population, be misrepresented by your abuse of them, as the occasion of scarcity and a diminution of labour: and never more let any of you put on the disguise of patriots, and pretend to pity the poor or the public; it is only in you a *monkish* species of charity. You would first collect in one way or other all they have, and then have it thought a mighty favor, a sign of goodness and your regard for them, to return a trifle.

Neither let inclosures be blamed for the destruction of houses: for this happens in open as well as inclosed places, and the reason is every where the same; for the closing of farms occasions it. The pernicious tendency of this custom is extremely evident; and yet self-interest is such an advocate for it, there is no probability of its being abolished by all the virtue and public spirit left in the country. For engrossers generally give more rent, perhaps pay it better, and want less allowed, if any thing at all, for repairs. The landlord thus finds an advantage without seeming to seek it, and the pleasure of this makes him wish he had not been so long at an unnecessary charge; the consideration of his own interest covers

covers all, and he cares not whether the public be better or worse for it. After this manner it often happens that houses are suffered to come down, though in a country proper for tillage, and where many families might be supported: and it is certain that nothing but a parliamentary interposition can effectually put a stop to the evil.

After asserting the benefits naturally resulting to the public from the draining of lands liable to inundations, and the inclosure of commons and open fields, which some of your very ingenious or very acute ones may observe with a disdainful sneer might have been sufficiently explained in a page or two, it will perhaps be thought quite superfluous to support the assertion by an appeal to precedents in ancient or modern times. For a great variety, corresponding in every material circumstance, will very readily occur to any person tolerably conversant in history: the states of *Greece*, *Asia minor*, *Egypt* itself, *Sicily*, and a hundred other places, amply abound with them; but let it suffice to produce an instance, especially as it will answer a double purpose, which comprehends every important particular, and may be found in *Italy*. I mean to compare

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the present *Campagna di Roma* with the *Campania* of old *Rome*.—And I think there cannot be a more striking contrast, or an instance from any part of the world more *a-propos*. A single quotation from an author of the first distinction will fully satisfy us, without any proofs from the *Roman* historians, that this country was once most amazingly populous: “We may reckon, says he, by a very moderate computation, more inhabitants in the *Campania* of old *Rome*, than are now in all *Italy*. And if we could number up those prodigious swarms that had settled themselves in every part of this delightful country, I question not but that they would amount to more than can be found, at present, in any six parts of *Europe* of the same extent.” It abounded formerly with towns, villas, plantations, and every demonstration of magnificence that an opulent luxurious people could fancy or effect: the air too was so agreeable, it was the retreat of the principal families during the excessive heat of summer. But at present, the inhabitants are few, wretchedly poor and idle; the nobility dare not trust themselves even in the towns, in the summer season, which are then infested with unwhole-

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some vapours from the lakes and marshes. And yet the fetid exhalations from some of them were always the same; as for instance, the *Albula*, now called *Salforata*: but then, it is thought, the air was purified by the vast numbers of fires; for the burning of any bituminous matter, as pit-coal or the like, is allowed by most physicians to disperse pestilential vapors, or at least prevent their malignity: and this corroborates the conjecture that the plague is occasioned by poisonous insects, which delight in a humid atmosphere, and cannot subsist where the air is impregnated with such-like effluvia: so that the observation of a judicious writer, and one of the faculty, may be very just, that the city of *London* has of late years been very much benefited in this particular by the great consumption of coals.

It would shock the present *Romans* to suppose that their religion has depopulated the country, and occasioned the badness of its air: but, whatever the superstitious regard for it may make any of them believe, it most certainly has. For it is here that the true spirit and genius of *Popery* discover themselves; the genuine effects of which are evident in the comparative desolation, poverty, unimproved

and almost uncultivated condition of the *Pope's* territories, and particularly the *Campagna*. The errors and absurdities of this religion, as affecting the faith, principles, and morals of mankind, as an established system of *Christianity* composed of *Jewish* and *Pagan* rituals, have been refuted and exposed ten thousand times; and it has been occasionally shewn, that the celibacy it recommends as the most perfect state, is unnatural and impolitic; which, under pretence of destroying one vice, most commonly favours another that is much worse: but to view it in its native ugliness, examine it now at *Rome*, or in the vicinity and jurisdiction of that favorite capital, where it appears, in all its deformity of power, the most arbitrary, oppressive, and tyrannical institution the world was ever cursed with. It is an enemy to the use of reason, the distinguishing faculty of man; an enemy to liberty, an enemy to human nature itself: and it is no wonder, with all these malignant qualities, that a government under its absolute direction should have enslaved, impoverished, and unpeopled one of the finest countries in the world.

It is not at all surprizing therefore that the draining even of the *Pontine* marshes should

not



not be effected: when people are resigned to slavery, and think it their duty to continue so (which is the case when religion rivets the fetters) they have no inclination to try expedients. It may be policy in the great: but it is always matter of principle with the vulgar: and the thing is just the same; only the latter do not deal in refinements.—— But we need not think it at all strange that improvements of public utility should be seldom attempted here, when so many natural advantages are neglected; nor is it true that their extreme ceremonious attention to the care of men's souls makes them disregard the immediate interest of their bodies. They cannot help it; it is the ruling genius of their religion that restrains them, and yet suffers them to be as great slaves to avarice and ambition as either the *Dutch* or *French*.—— The *Pope* is truly a *Pater-Familias* to his people, and provides for them after the patriarchal manner; for some as sons, for the greatest part as slaves: the general good of these therefore is always consulted with an absolute subserviency to that of the other; and this is not peculiar to a state purely ecclesiastical; for the same spirit communicates itself in different measures to every government where the same religion

religion is established. And hence it is that *Popery* suits so well with absolute monarchies, arbitrary power and despotism being congenial to it: hence too we may learn to value *Protestantism*, as a system of religion the reverse of this, and favorable to liberty; having, as the characteristic of *Christianity*, its foundation in benevolence.

But what connection hath *Popery* with the improvements recommended in this essay? Do establishments in religion any way affect the management of country or commercial affairs? Yes. I am of opinion they really do; and I could support the opinion by all the authority that can be appealed to in such a case—the most experienced politicians, the produce, cultivation, customs, or trade of kingdoms, so various under different institutions:—but I only mean to observe that *Popery* is a particular enemy to those improvements which are of general advantage, and diffuse wealth and liberty among the people; most of the petty states of *Italy*, *Spain*, and *Portugal*, nay even *France* itself, where the glory of the monarchy is the actuating spirit in almost every rank, and the inhabitants as independent papists as possible, are flagrant and irrefragable proofs of

of it. And with as much more trade and as little restraint from religion as the *Dutch* themselves, the effects of its former influence are still evident here in *England*.—The vast demesnes of the crown, the extensive estates of many barons, the prodigious quantity of land assigned for the support of abbies and the like, were so many invincible obstacles to the experiments that must improve and perfect agriculture: for estates of any consequence being in few hands, the proprietors could live in princely state and luxury, without advancing their rents; the tenants could maintain their families well enough in those frugal times without attempting to increase the common produce of their farms; the gentry could do but little, and the small freeholders almost nothing, by way of example; and, to complete all, the rich gave into an ostentatious display of charity in imitation of the *monks*, and therefore erected alms-houses, endowed hospitals, and contrived how to maintain rather than employ the poor; and so what should support the sick, or the old, or the decrepid only, was almost indiscriminately bestowed, and a set of lazy lusty beggars thereby encouraged in idleness.—But a revolution in these matters



soon followed the national rejection of *Popery*, the natural support of them: and every period of its duration has been distinguished by an enlargement of religious and civil liberty, an improvement in arts, manufactures, and commerce, a liberal advancement in science, a noble exertion of power in the establishment of such foundations as do honor to human nature, and are the glory of the reformed religion. Among which it is very observable, as a first effort, inclosures were recommended to public regard by the practice of the most considerable freeholders; not merely, as inattention or impolitic ignorance pretends, from a motive of self-interest and partial advantage; altogether inconsistent with the public good, but from a rational presumption, which was every year confirmed by fresh experience, that such a practice would certainly be of universal utility, and was indeed become necessary as a means of employing thousands that were left destitute, and strangers to industry because they had been brought up only to the begging trade.

The nation has ever since increased prodigiously in people and riches; the middling sort, in particular, living in as genteel a manner as  
many

many of the nobility themselves formerly; the inferior class enjoy their due proportion of benefits, and in the general live free and in comfort; while the peasantry in other countries, and especially *popish*, are in a condition very little different from slavery at the best, and in a particular manner beholden to the climate for the few blessings they do receive. And the provision made for the poor must be allowed to exceed every thing of the kind, except what we meet with in *Holland* only; tho' it is certain the *French*, as they grow less and less bigotted to *popery*, have of late pursued such measures in respect of their *police* as would have alarmed all their fanatics formerly, and produced a commotion in the state. And among other causes of this opulence and populousity in our country, we may justly reckon the various improvements in agriculture, which have been principally promoted by draining and inclosure: notwithstanding this, there are still great numbers strangely prejudiced against the practice, tho' not one I ever met with knows why, unless some common-place arguments that derive their force from a few local inconveniencies, and are mostly very partially applied, may be thought good reasoning. But

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the most extraordinary is, there are some, I would say only some, few of the Clergy\* in England still such friends to hierarchy of

\* The most specious arguments brought by the author of the *Enquiry*, &c. derive their principal force from an accidental abuse of the advantages, which the inclosing of commons or open fields must naturally produce. But he does not seem to dislike the practice so much (tho' he argues on every point against it with the greatest acrimony) for the sacrifice of oak, and elm, and ash, in temporary posts and rails, or the rejection and distress of the small tenant-farmers, or the demolition of houses, and exclusion of the poor from the privileges they enjoyed in the open fields, or the monopoly of lands, or even the neglect of tillage by laying down the land for grass, and, as the facetious author of the *New Bath Guide* expresses it,

*For lawning a hundred good acres of wheat——*

as for being more peculiarly conducive to the emolument of "Lords of Manors, the Clergy, or other impropiators of tythes, and one or two more of the principal proprietors in a parish."——As to the Clergy in particular, who, in my opinion, have received no very distinguished favors, on account of the institution of their order, since the demise of Queen Ann, he can't forbear discovering a solicitude about them, which no true Englishman of the established church would ever be affected with—and which no scrupulous sectary need entertain to his own torment, since the government have found out at last the secret, and know how to reconcile the Dissenters to the Surplice, the Cross, the Ring, and all the half-pagan half-papal rituals, which Divines have in vain endeavoured to convince them were what a conscientious christian may comply with, or admit as lawful, from the judicious Hooker, down to Dr. Trapp. And one would think he put the Clergy on a separate interest from the state, when he says—"It is urged as another objection to inclosing, on the plan upon which

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of the high fort, and but one remove from popery, as to prefer the collection of tythes in kind in open parishes, to an adequate allotment of land, tho' it must be owned, if they have no *relique* of the old leaven,

" it is now generally pursued, that thereby the landed interest of the Clergy, and consequently the wealth and power of the church, is greatly increased. One seventh or eighth part of the kingdom, hereby put into their hands, free of all expence, added to other ecclesiastical revenues, must undoubtedly make them a very *considerable* body. With all due respect to the sacred function, and to the worthy characters of many Clergymen, it is humbly submitted to the legislature, and the public, whether such an increase of their landed interest be consistent with the principles of *sound* policy, or the measures pursued by former parliaments" [and give me leave to say, in particular, the Rump] " of *very* respectable memory. One design of the statute of Mortmain seems to have been, to prevent an undue increase of the *landed interest* of the church, as what would be often injurious to individuals, and generally so to the public. But the landed interest of the church is increased more by inclosing-bills in one year, than it would probably be in fifty by charitable legacies." [True enough, if expected to be bestowed by its enemies, such as our pious author seems to be, or such as those modest dogmatists in morality and religion, *Hume* and *Jenyns*.] " It will be said, perhaps, that this land is only granted to the Clergy, in lieu of their tythes, to which they had a legal right before; and undoubtedly every *good* minister has not only a legal, but a natural right, from his parish. But there is an important difference to a nation, between allowing the Clergy a share of the products of the land, and giving them the land itself, especially a seventh or eighth of the one instead of a tenth of the other."

no ambition to tyrannize and oppress in their way like real *papists*, the eligibility of such equivalent is infinitely superior.—Now I have just mentioned the Clergy, let me be indulged with a reflection in the digressive way; for I would observe, it is very much to be regretted by every friend to the Church of *England*, as a capital defect at the Reformation, when the affair would have made no more stir, and have fallen with the common censure, that a more regular and proportionate appointment, with more justice to the subject, and more agreeable to the *spirit* of *protestantism*, was not made to support them with becoming distinction according to their respective dignity and office. As it is, there are Rectorial incomes, where a single Curate does duty, that far exceed the revenues of many a Bishop; and all impropriations in particular have a good deal of the air, the evil, and arbitrary disposition of *popery*. And it may be regretted still by some people: for if the Great, who pretend to patriotism and public spirit, cannot, with all their power, bring about a proper regulation of the *land-tax*, and even extend it to the famous nursery of Officers, Governors, and Statesmen, can it be imagined the

the dignified and richly beneficed part of the Clergy will ever promote a scheme, that can do none of them much good, and may do several much harm? No, no, no; it cannot, it cannot, I am satisfy'd; and therefore shall never trouble myself so much about it as to wish for it. I was once afraid this digression would have been of no service to me: but now I fancy it may; only I must mortify myself a little, and for once shake hands with avarice, like a Courtier, tho' I had rather stab the fiend.—But my heart fails me, and recoils with horror, as if I was going to handle a serpent; so that I must leave any further management of this business with some individuals to an old and intimate acquaintance of theirs, one *Self-interest*.

To drain and inclose commons and open fields, to restrain the occupiers by proper regulations, so that *every part* of the country may be cultivated to the greatest advantage, and it's productions increased as much as possible, is what I contend for in conjunction: and I would extend the scheme in the most comprehensive manner by the *public* encouragement of plantations in such places as will produce neither corn or herbage worth regarding.



garding. This would itself become a manufacture, by employing a considerable number of poor men, and at such seasons of the year too when there is generally the least occasion for labourers: the example of many persons of fortune, the opinion of many experienced authors, the great scarcity even of ash and several other sorts of forest trees, and the laudable efforts of a public-spirited society to promote arts, manufactures and commerce, may be appealed to as the most satisfactory proofs that the national welfare is very much interested in the success of it. And it will be sufficient for me just to observe, that the extreme selfishness of the nurserymen, like that of the fishmongers at *Billingsgate*, has for a long time been an enemy to plenty, and prevented the raising of the choicest sort of trees in a common way, such as the *cedars* for instance; tho' it is well known they thrive extremely in climates both hotter and colder than ours: in truth, we are apt to treat exotics with too much tenderness; for we find that several tropical shrubs, which an author so late as *Bradley* directed to be housed in winter, do very well in the open air. But 'tis the interest of these gentry to make the

most of a small spot, and therefore they will sooner throw away what they cannot sell, than lower the price of it, by which means they take advantage of some wealthy planters, and discourage others that have had no experience.

The *New-England pine*, which is by far the most beautiful of all, and equals any other, in the rapidity of its growth, may be raised with such facility, that five Shillings expended in seed, after once transplanting the produce at two years old, will afford you next year as many fine plants as would cost you perhaps ten pounds, if bought according to the catalogues. Knowing this to be as near the truth as any thing of the kind need be asserted, because the nurserymen are mostly the factors, and, if possible, secure the best seed to themselves and associates, I was once very much astonished to see a gentleman's nursery, where that species of *pine*, commonly called *Scotch fir*, was raised in such abundance as to have planted several thousand acres: but I had no sooner expressed my surprize, than one of the company, assuming a *droll* air, assured me he knew the gentleman, and that he raised this species to show his loyalty. I made no reply

ply, as not being willing to extend the factious epithets of politics to the vegetable tribe: since it is certainly best, without fancifully preferring any particular, and proscribing half the forest in the spirit of favoritism, to intermix as much as may be in a close plantation every kind of tree, that suits the place; for there is no doubt the trees will thrive better than if they were all of the same species, because the roots strike down or spread in a different manner, and extract most certainly a different nutriment. This makes the curious draw up the noble oak itself, by interplanting inferior sorts, which may afterwards be destroyed or suffer'd to continue, as circumstances seem to require; and by this means the principal runs up faster than if it had been as closely surrounded by those of its own stock. And if it be so, those ridiculous (or if your taste will have it, ornamental) circular clumps, which are almost every where observable, must be very absurdly planted with trees of the same sort: for supposing them all evergreens, a judicious planter may arrange them so as gradually to darken or diversify the shade in the most agreeable manner from the shining



shining green of the *New England* or *Weymouth Pine*, to the very obscure one of the *Cypress* or *Yew*; nor can I see why these mournful families should be so generally expelled the society of the forest, notwithstanding the present fashionable passion for *Firs* and *Pines*. They have their utility; and this ought to secure them an adequate allotment. The *Yew* indeed may claim regard, because it will flourish among rocks, where hardly any thing else will grow, and the expence of planting it must be of service to the poor, and cannot hurt the rich.

But I presume not to direct the manner of planting; I would only contribute a trifle towards exciting the spirit, and extending the design of it; for which purpose I have just hinted at some particulars, that have escaped the attention of some late writers, and must take the liberty to dissent from the notion, which seems traditionary from one to another of them, about the removal of certain trees: and I do this with less reluctance, as it has been a great obstruction to the practice, I would gladly promote. An ingenious author, in his recommendation of the *Resinous Pine-tree*, prescribes a tedious expensive preparation of the

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ground, and asserts, without the least qualifying salvo of an exception, that *Pines* won't bear transplanting. 'Tis true, there are some sorts that will not bear it so well as others; but every sort, even the *Stone Pine* itself, which perhaps is the most difficult of all to remove with safety, will yet most certainly bear it: and I have myself known the *Weymouth*, the most valuable of all, make a shoot of fifteen inches the first year. The *tap-rooted* trees, as they are called, will bear transplanting too, and soon form themselves a new tap-root; which has been proved by the repeated transplantation of them. I don't mean to contest it that such trees will not make a quicker progress when properly raised in the place where they are intended to remain; which is true even of the *Elm*: but I may venture to say that the great expence of raising them so has discouraged some of twenty thousand a year. And therefore we had better submit to a little retardation of the growth by removal, than go without the benefit entirely.

But if there be any sort of trees, that will not endure a removal from the nursery spot, let them be indulged with one: I am sure their importance will not require one of any

considerable extent, as I am satisfy'd the *Oak* ought not to be rank'd in the number; tho' we often hear of many an expensive, many an arduous attempt to raise this titular monarch of the woods with the utmost speed and perfection. And the attempt would never have met with my disapprobation (let me say it without vanity, as a well-wisher to the public) had it not been found so very obstructive to the general plan I propose: for I would have not only the swampy places planted with trees of the *aquatic* kind, but the moors and mountains, that produce nothing at present of much consequence to man or beast, covered with forest trees of every sort, from the *Birch* to the *Cedar of Libanus*.

This may be esteemed a romantic project, and confronted at first sight with impracticability by all the narrow-minded sons of caution; who think they are launching into the vast *Pacific*, if they go a little farther than their fathers did, and once lose sight of *present profit*, the *pole-star* of their proceedings: for, not daring to sail by the *compass*, they will hazard nothing for posterity; and are like that ingenious Fellow of a college, who observed, that we were always doing and doing for poste-



rity; he should be glad to know when posterity  
 ever did any thing for us.—A cabinet plan of  
 operations may be of general use, tho' it must  
 be owned ridiculous when too circumstantially  
 settled before the opening of the campaign:  
 in like manner, every scheme of this sort,  
 formed with a view to public utility, will  
 have still more of absurdity in it, (if it must  
 have any) the more it aims at minuteness, the  
 more provision it seems to make for incidental  
 and necessary deviations. But the general ex-  
 pediency of it will appear more evident, if we  
 do but consider, that a country full of people  
 requires cultivation, like a garden, in com-  
 parison of one not half inhabited: so that  
 it may be reasonable enough for our \* fellow  
 subjects

\* The author would by no means insinuate, that the reso-  
 lute stand, which several of the Colonists continue to make  
 against the unconstitutional attempts of arbitrary and despotic  
 Ministers, should be any longer look'd on as the natural effort  
 of a settled affection for independence: the impolitic mea-  
 sures still pursued by the enemies of liberty, and the very su-  
 perb air of prerogative assumed by *Bernard*, and some other of  
 their Governors, must be allowed sufficient to inspirit their  
 regard for freedom, their rights and privileges, and make  
 them oppose, at every hazard, every villainous encroachment  
 on either. And yet it must be owned, by a dispassionate  
 observer of their proceedings, that they were too precipitant  
 at first, and therefore unavoidably led them to an avowal of  
 claims absolutely incompatible with the interest of the mother  
 country, and eventually subversive of it's natural and legal  
 superiority.

subjects (if I may call them so) in the *American* colonies to disregard at present an immensity of waste, and to destroy several of the finest forests in the world, because they are too extensive, or the land they grow upon convertible to tillage, and capable of the greatest improvement. And it may surely be reasonable, and very requisite, for us in *England*, where almost every acre is claimed by somebody, to obtain the most profitable productions we can, by a proper management of every part. Our ancestors, if we may judge by the remaining instances of their extravagance, never imagined that we could want wood; the *Americans* may think so of their descendents, and yet, in all probability, they will have reason to regret the havock of the fire and ax, which now spreads sometimes with such absolute destruction over places proper only for the growth of wood.

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